

## Part II of II

### INDIA TO AMERICA: AN ASIAN JOURNEY

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As narrated in Part I, Shully and I were married on 14 July 1963. After three weeks, we boarded the SS Victoria to travel to the United States. The steamship would take us to Naples, Italy, then a train to Rome and Paris, a ferry to London and finally a flight to New York.



Part II narrates the following accounts of our journey:

- meeting Marco and Maria in Italy,
- enrolling for graduate study at State University of New York, Buffalo,
- the birth of our daughter Anuradha,
- a distinguished teaching career at the University of West Florida,
- several profitable real-estate investment ventures,
- Shully's accidental death and the resultant grief,
- coming to terms with life.

When we landed in Italy, we met Marco and Maria on the train from Naples to Rome. The couple invited us to spend the night with them at their home rather than wait at railway stations for connecting trains for onward journey. The story is related here.

#### ITALIAN WELCOME

“Where ya from? Where ya going?” –asked the thirtyish Italian couple, with an eight-year old girl in tow, seated next us on a train bound from Naples to Rome. We had just gotten off the boat from Bombay. The train would take us to Rome, then a 4-hour wait to catch the next train to Paris. The year was 1963.

“My wife and I are from India. We are headed for London via Rome and Paris. Our final destination: America.” The Italian couple looked us over from head to toe and seemed to be pleased. They spoke a little English with a thick Italian accent. Our command of the language was only a little better. We managed to communicate. Hand movements and facial expressions filled the verbal gap. For the next 20 to 30 minutes, we exchanged bits and pieces of information about this and that—mostly about families and India.

“You spend the night at our home. No waiting 4 hours at the Rome station. Not comfortable,” the Italian man said. His brunette wife nodded in assent.

The offer was irresistible. No waiting at the train station during night hours; an opportunity to make friends; to eat Italian food; to learn about Italian culture. Shully and I consulted with each other. Should we accept an invitation from strangers we just met on the train? “But they seem so nice.” After several minutes of discussion between us, I finally said: “Yes. We would love to spend the night at your place.” This is how we developed a great friendship.

Our hosts, Marco and Maria, lived in a large house with a front porch and tall arches. Obviously, they were wealthy. We spent the next two days with them instead of just the night. They drove us around Rome in their shiny Fiat. We visited the Trevi Fountain, the Forum and the Vatican, among other sites. I threw a couple of coins in the Trevi Fountain, as most tourists do. According to folklore, if you throw a coin into the Trevi Fountain, you are destined to return to Rome. And as destined, I returned to Rome in 1992 during a semester-long teaching stint in Italy.



*Rome, Italy 1963; Shully photographed with Italian hosts: Marco, his wife Maria and their daughter. We met them on the train from Naples to Rome. They invited us to spend 2 days with them at their home in Rome. They showed us several of the popular tourist spots in and around the Capital.*

I have pondered about the wisdom of our spending two nights in Rome at the home of total strangers. Growing up in integrated neighborhoods in India produces high social trust. Talking with strangers was not a taboo in our social milieu. Sharing of food and other items was common. We implicitly trusted our neighbors. Children played in each other’s homes. Shully grew up in the co-op housing for Saraswat Brahmins in Bombay where everyone knew everyone else. During my college days, I once stayed at the home of total strangers when I was stranded at the train station away from home.

The level of social trust in the traditional Indian society was high. The level of trust in contemporary society has declined. Television and the Internet often decrease social trust. Exaggerated stories about incidents of violence and crime are a regular feature in the media. Shully and I were comfortable in accepting an invitation to stay with a couple we just met on the train. Obviously, Italian social trust was also high, as demonstrated by the actions of our host couple. We stayed friends with the Italian couple and exchanged Christmas cards for the next several years.

## VIII. THE CITY OF BUFFALO: COLD WEATHER, WARM PEOPLE

### 1963-1969

During this time . . .

- President Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated
- Anti-Vietnam War protests spread on college campuses

- Counterculture became popular in Hollywood and on college campuses
- Hare Krishnas gained popularity; yoga studios opened in several cities, including Buffalo
- Gasoline: .33 cents per gallon; milk: .85 cents per gallon
- Indira Gandhi elected as India's Prime Minister

We reached Buffalo, N.Y., on August 25, 1963. Buffalo lies in the northern colder region of the U.S. Even the month of August was chilly. Buffalo winters are notorious; Buffalo is sometimes called the snow capital of the world. The nearby Lake Erie can produce blizzards that dump several feet of snow in winter months. Shully's wardrobe included blouses and silk saris but few warm clothes. Quickly, we had to acquire a winter wardrobe of stockings, sweaters and overcoats.

The coldness of the weather was however mitigated by the warmth of the people. The University's International Center under Larry Smith came to our aid. Under Larry's leadership, woolen clothes, blankets, and sheets were collected from university employees and given to us. We also received, as did other international students, dishes, pans and pots and a few items of furniture. We found a 2-bedroom municipal subsidized housing on LaForce Drive at \$38 per month, utilities included. This was a bargain. My newly found classmates helped move the furniture into our apartment. We marveled at American abundance and peoples' sense of generosity. I bought a 1957-Plymouth car for \$200 to ferry us back and forth. Used cars were 'dirt-cheap' in America.

At this time we also received cost free certain food items under the government's food assistance program. I recall that we got on a monthly basis items such as rice, beans, butter and canned beef. As we did not care for canned beef, we gave it away to other recipients or exchanged it for rice, beans and butter. The food distribution program was part of the US agricultural policy to shore up farm prices. The government bought surplus commodities from farmers and distributed the same to many families.

**Our New-Found Friends.** David and Nancy Whitelaw, both teachers, were our new-found friends soon after we landed in Buffalo. They had previously taught in Turkey and thus were internationally oriented. They helped us transition to American life in numerous ways. We learnt to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays at their home. They introduced us to the joys of camping in the forest. Dave helped Shully to learn how to drive, a task which I flunked at (never try to teach driving to your spouse). Nancy is a writer and is the author of over a dozen books. She edited one of my books and helped improve its prose. We reciprocated their kindness by treating them to Indian meals. Shully learned to cook awesome curried preparations. We have stayed close friends with the Whitelaws over the decades.



*Shully and Anuradha for Christmas at the Whitelaw home. Nancy is seated next to them; about 1966.*

**Dr. Martin Luther King.** Three days after we reached Buffalo, I heard Dr. Martin Luther King's stirring speech at the Lincoln Memorial. "America must rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed that all men are

created equal.” Dr. King said that he had a dream that some day in America “his four little children will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” I was moved. The powerfully spoken words still ring in my ears. I wanted to learn more about Dr. King.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had traveled to India in 1959 to learn about Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent civil disobedience movement, called *Satyagraha*. Gandhi fought and succeeded in liberating India from under the British colonial rule largely by peaceful means. Following Gandhi, Dr. King adopted civil-disobedience as a method of protest to fight racial injustice in the US. Like Gandhi, Dr. King was beaten, bruised and belittled. And, like Gandhi, King died of an assassin’s bullet.

I enrolled at the State University of New York at Buffalo (popularly known as UB) for a doctoral program in Political Science. The Political Science department was then headed by the nationally known Dr. Roy Macridis. Other luminaries included: Dr. John Wahlke, Dr. Richard Cox, Dr. Bernard Brown, Dr. Donald Rosenthal and Dr. Claude Welch. I took three graduate-level courses (9 hours) each semester. Course work consisted of leading seminar discussions and writing research papers. The \$1,800 stipend required me to grade undergraduate exam papers and to lead a freshman tutorial group. The stipend was increased by \$200 yearly for the next three years.

The University’s Political Science department in that time period was small at 10 faculty members. The faculty and the graduate students were bonded like a family. We were invited to cocktails and food at faculty homes. Shully and I reciprocated with dinner invitations to faculty and fellow students at our home. Rice pilaf, chick peas, chicken curry, and beer were the common food items that we served. Food was cheap then: potatoes and onions .05/lb, rice .10/lb, butter .49/lb, chicken .19/lb, beer \$3.50/case (24 bottles). Shully was a good host and a cook. Her natural grace was a trump card.

The University had a sizeable number of international students, numbering some 500-600. We were members of the international club and participated in its various activities. We celebrated many national holidays, such as: the Chinese New Year, India’s Republic Day, Philippines Independence Day, and so forth. Living on an American campus, one learns so much about the rest of the world.

The US leads the world in attracting international students. International student enrollment has increased, from 36,000 in 1956 to nearly 1 million in 2020 (see a publication titled: *Open Doors*). International students constitute nearly 5 percent of the total US student body. China followed by India has the largest number of students enrolled. International students help spread America’s cultural influence around the world. They make the best American ambassadors. Further, international students contribute handsomely to the college budgets. American colleges have come to depend on foreign students to fill their financial needs.

My own progress as a graduate student continued smoothly. I spent many an hour in the library, virtually living there. Writing graduate-level research papers never come easy to me. It took many hours of work. I worked hard at my studies. I was not the top student. I received a mixture of A’s and B’s.



Among the one dozen graduate students in Political Science in my batch, one-third dropped out under pressure of work. They could not cope with the rigors of graduate-level study. I persevered and continued. It took me 5 years to complete the degree including writing a 310-page Dissertation, titled *Political Participation in India*. Perseverance and hard work paid off. "Endure and you will conquer; bear and you will succeed." Endurance is not a sprint; it is a long race, one step at a time.

Endurance paid off. I was the first recipient of the PH.D. Degree in Political Science at UB. *Buffalo Courier Express* carried the news: "India Native to Get First UB Degree".

#### EINSTEIN NEED NOT APPLY

In the meantime, Shully received a teaching certificate at Buffalo State College in 1965. Buffalo State was a teachers college. She was hired to teach Physics in the Buffalo school district (see: "She Teaches Physics at WCHS" reproduced hereunder). Within 4 months, she was let go. Reason: being a non-citizen, she was not eligible to teach in the NY public school system. The school Superintendent tried his hardest to keep Shully on the payroll, but the NY State Education Department would not and could not approve her candidacy. Shully received the 16 weeks' salary. The Superintendent was genuinely remorseful. He lamented, "Even Dr. Einstein could not have taught in NY public schools." As is well known, Albert Einstein arrived in America as a refugee from Hitler's Germany in 1933. Einstein could teach at the famous Princeton University but as a non-citizen he could not teach in the NY State school system.

Einstein received US citizenship within a few years of his landing. This route was not open to Shully and me. As nationals of India, we were not eligible for American citizenship. The 1924 National Origins Act severely restricted Asian immigration. The 1924 Act established quotas for each country. Western European countries were given larger quotas; Southern and Eastern European countries received lower quotas. Asians were essentially banned. For example, Germany was given a quota of 51,000 per year, and Britain 45,000. Itsy bitsy Ireland had a quota of 31,000. Eastern European countries of Poland, Ukraine, Greece, Italy and others, each had a smaller quota of 4,000 to 5,000. China and India each were allowed minimal 100.

Pressure built up after World War II to change the unfair immigration policy. The pressure came from Eastern Europeans: Italians, Greeks, Poles, Jews and others. Sweeping changes in immigration policy were enacted in 1965 under President Lyndon Johnson. The new law eliminated ethnicity and race as factors in immigration. Every nation regardless of size, race, religion, and political ideology was allowed

20,000 immigrants with a total for all countries not to exceed 170,000 per year. For the first time, India and China were placed on the same footing as Germany and England. Without the sweeping changes enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1965, Shully and I would not be settled in the US. We were admitted to permanent residency (green cards) in 1966 and to U.S. citizenship in 1972. Additional information on immigration history is available in my article on "Asian Americans" at [www.uwf.edu/lgoel](http://www.uwf.edu/lgoel).

Every cloud has a silver lining. Instead of pursuing a teaching career in a public school, Shully joined the newly created Computer Science department at the State University at Buffalo. She graduated with a Master's degree in Computer Science in 1969, the same year I got my Ph.D. It was a double celebration, therefore. This led to a high level Systems Analyst position for her with the U.S. Navy a few years later.

The following newspaper story was published in a Buffalo paper before Shully was let go:

**"She Teaches Physics at WCHS"**

## She Teaches Physics at WCHS

She is slim, dark-haired, and alert, and she doesn't look a day older than some of her pupils in the physics classes she teaches at Williamsville Central Senior High School.

We are talking about twenty-four-year-old Mrs. Schully Goel, mother of a nine-month old daughter, Charlotte, who is now with her maternal grandparents in India, where she is known as Anuradha. Mrs. Goel not only teaches physics but is studying for her Bachelor of Science degree at State University College.

Her shoulder length black hair swung lightly as she talked about her delightful costume - her native sari. It was of a fine six yard piece of silver gray silk with a fine stripe of red, blue and white spaced regularly the width of the material. Draped over her shoulder, the end fell into a deep, deep border of solid black with one stripe of the three colors near the top. Her armlet on her upper left arm and the other in her hand are native 'costume' jewelry. Her blouse of sheer pink silk is lined, and the lining Mrs. Goel did herself.

Educated in a Scottish Mission Girls School in Bombay, Mrs. Goel learned to write the English alphabet in the seventh grade but after that was on her own and had to learn to write the words by herself.

Despite her busy schedule, Mrs. Goel finds time to make many of her own clothes. She and her husband, Lal Goel, belong to the 'Indian Associa-

tion' here and enjoy the meetings of the some one hundred and sixty families who get together to bring a touch of 'home' to their present day American lives.

The local Association often exchanges visits with other branches of the group in Rochester and Syracuse when some especially interesting plan is involved or when visiting in the other city.

Lal Goel is a graduate assistant at the University of Buffalo, on a scholarship, studying for his Ph.D. in political science.

Mrs. Goel says the schools in India are basically planned on the English school system and there is considerably more discipline than here. She likes the freedom our young people have as she feels it brings out the best in them and results in well informed young people.

There are eleven grades in the schools at home, she reports, with summer vacations about the same as ours. This arrangement stems from the fact that 'before Independence,' the Englishmen liked to get 'into the hills' in the heat of summer and so school vacations naturally followed. There are Montessori schools for the pre-kindergarten youngsters and entrance into kindergarten is based approximately on the same age requirement as ours.

The Ministry of Education controls the schools in India, Mrs. Goel reports, and there are Boards of Education for several states, which handle the mechanics of the schools



MRS. SCHULLY GOEL

under the Ministry. Public schools here would be considered 'government' schools and privately operated schools are called 'private.'

Mrs. Goel says there is no caste anymore in India. Once in a while a woman can be distinguished as coming from a certain town or village by the sari she wears but mostly there is nothing to separate one person's place in society from another's. She mentioned that this has been so since 'independence' and also mentioned the rise of an 'outcast' to the highest position in the land, when he wrote the constitution of the country. He also married a 'high caste' girl.

Mr. and Mrs. Goel have been here now about a year and a half and she hopes to get home when school closes to see her daughter and her parents. If this is not possible, she hopes to bring her mother at least here with the baby, for a visit. She is still in doubt as to what the next year will bring but is hopeful her daughter, born here, can be with her permanently soon.

Asked why she chose physics, Mrs. Goel mentioned the lack of women in this field and also the fact that she was always good in math and liked physics when in school.

She feels she has never lost her 'learning ability' and shows it in her keen interest in all that goes on.

Life here, according to this attractive young physics teacher, is stimulating, and she is eager to continue learning.

## BROTHER KRISHAN IN BUFFALO

My brother Krishan, some 4 years younger than I, is the baby of the family. We lost our mother when Krishan was only 2 or 3 years old. The loss of Mother affected him, as it affected me. He was raised by Grandmother and elder sisters. He graduated in 1961 from Ranbir College in Punjab with a B.A. degree. Prospects for suitable employment for him in Punjab were minimal. He tried selling life insurance for which he was not suited. Therefore, he decided on higher education in the US. Our Father was not supportive of his move to the US. Like me, Krishan too might be lost to the lures of America. As in all things, Father accepted what must come. Fate is insurmountable.

Krishan moved in with us upon arrival in 1964. We managed to live frugally within my \$2,000/year graduate assistantship. He enrolled at Buffalo State College for a graduate degree in Library Science. This was the smartest decision he made. He struggled with the English language and the rigors of the American system of education. To supplement his income, he washed dishes at the college cafeteria. Buffalo winters are notorious. He walked over a mile to college in sub-zero weather. He worked hard and within two years earned the Master's degree in Library Science. I was very proud of him. Krishan was the first one in the family to get a full-time job in 1966. Employment opportunities at that time period were excellent. He worked in the catalog department at the University library. Krishan turned the first salary check he received over to me. I was touched at his gesture. I did not take it.

Krishan married Santosh during his visit to India in 1969. It was a semi-arranged marriage: they got to know each other briefly before marriage. Santosh, earned a Special Education diploma after 2 years of study in Buffalo, and subsequently taught in the Maryland school system. Krishan and Santosh are obviously doing very well. They built an expensive home in the suburbs of Baltimore, MD, and drive expensive cars. They have brought forth two lovely children: Rajiv and Abhilasha. Rajiv is presently a very successful attorney in Maryland. Abhilasha is a medical doctor in North Carolina, specializing as a Nephrologist, a kidney specialist. It pleases me that Krishan and Santosh are settled in the United States. We are a close-knit family. A close-knit family is like a safe harbor.

## JOYS OF PARENTING

Our daughter Anuradha (Anu) Charlot born in 1964 was a blessing. Her middle name was selected after Charlot Fetterman, the Book-Store manager at Buffalo State College, where Shully was enrolled for a teaching certificate. Charlot Fetterman provided Shully moral and material support. She invited us to her home more than once, and even sowed for Shully a special maternity dress during her pregnancy. We decided that if our first born child was a girl, her middle name would be Charlot. If it was a boy, his middle name would be Richard, after the very helpful Dr. Richard Whitford, the International Student Advisor at Buffalo State.



Our daughter Anuradha spent the first two years of her infancy in Bombay rather than with us in Buffalo. Shully found it difficult to be both a full time student and a mother. Financially also, we were stranded with my meager stipend of \$2,000/yr. Hiring a baby sitter was not an option. Shully decided that it would be better for our infant child

to be raised by her grandmother in Bombay. The child would be nurtured in a more wholesome environment. Anuradha spent the next two years of her childhood with grandparents in Bombay.

During her two year stay with grandparents in Bombay, Anuradha learned to speak Konkani, the spoken language of the Saraswat community. This is no small achievement. She is bonded with her cousins in Bombay.

Anuradha joined us in Buffalo at age 2. The young child's presence in the house was spiritually uplifting. Children add so much to one's life. Our child was well behaved and did not cry much, unlike the small children I had known in Punjab. My journal entries say that she was playful and loveable, seldom irascible or irritable. The only trouble was in getting her to sleep in her own bed when she first joined us. She was used to falling asleep in her grandmother's lap in Bombay. It was difficult to break the habit. For many months after she joined us, Anuradha would repeat the words "Manush Palla," meaning "the man fell down." Upon inquiry it was learned that she had witnessed a man fall down while leaning over the railing of a second floor balcony in Bombay. The man suffered injury but lived. Even 2-year olds remember horrific incidents.

Once, the three of us went for a picnic at the nearby campus greens in Buffalo. The picnic lawns fronted on the busy Main Street. I was playing hide and seek with my 3 year-old child. She would hide behind the trees and I would find her. Then all of a sudden she started running towards the busy Main Street. The faster I chased to catch her, the faster she ran, laughing all the way. My heart was racing. I feared that she would enter the busy Main Street before I could catch her. Fortunately, I caught her just inches from her entering the street. I retraced my steps and fell back on the lawn with the child firmly in my grip. God was watching over us.



*Our daughter Anuradha in high school*

Sometime in 1967, Shully's elder sister Suman and her 3-year old child Chitra joined us in Buffalo. Anuradha and Chitra both joined the Guardian Angel day nursery. The nursery was run by Sister Michalda and her assistants, all Catholic Nuns. The girls learned to sing songs and play games. Both girls picked up the Yankee accent.

#### TEENAGE REBELLION

Teenage rebellion is a common feature of growing up in American culture. The classic novel *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger is the quintessential book on teenage rebellion. On the topic of raising teenagers, Mark Twain advised, "When a boy turns 13, put him in a barrel and feed him through a knot hole. When he turns 16, plug up the hole."

This description did not apply to Anuradha, nor does it apply to my nephews and nieces. Anuradha was a well behaved adolescent not given to flare-ups or unruly behavior. Only a few times was she



disagreeable during her teenage years. She did not engage in any high risk experimentation. We did not lay down extensive rules for her to follow. I did not shout or yell at her. It is possible that I was blind to any fault on my daughter's part. Perhaps, Shully took care of any problems that might crop up without involving me.

Serious teenage rebellion and juvenile delinquency are essentially a Western phenomenon. These problems are not universal. Indian kids do not usually exhibit behavioral problems in teenage years. During a study visit to Japan in 2,000, I noticed that Japanese youth are similarly well-behaved.

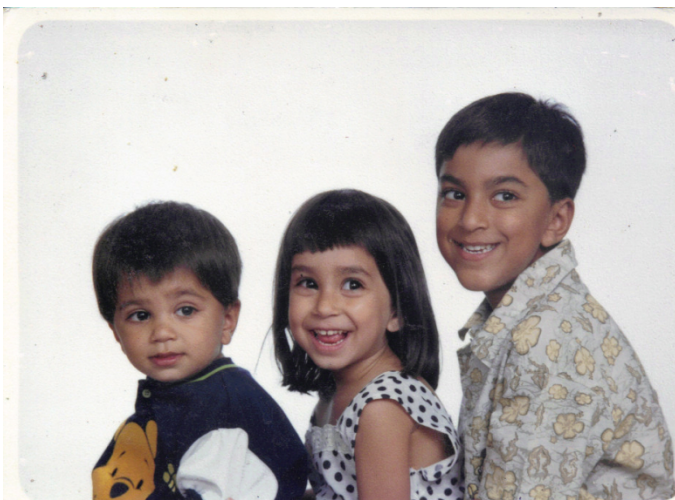
The following observations on lack of teenage rebellion in India are suggestive.

- Indian kids at all ages are more fully integrated with the adult world than is typical in America. Children are normally included in social gatherings. There are few 'adults only' parties. Children are privy to all the gossip of an Indian family.
- Indian children go to bed on a more relaxed time schedule. There are few strict bedtime hours.
- Children have few special foods. They eat what everyone else in the family eats. Children may drink even tea or coffee, beverages that are usually denied to American children.
- Physical punishment is rare. I was hit only once by my father for avoiding being taken to school, as narrated previously. I never physically punished my daughter. I have never witnessed my grandchildren being physically punished. This observation does not apply to all families.
- Indian children are generally quite responsible with money. We kept cash at home to buy groceries and household supplies. Our daughter Anuradha had full access to the cash. She never abused the freedom. I find my grandchildren being responsible with money.
- Indian kids are seldom sheltered from bad news. If tragedy strikes or misfortune happens, children learn about these matters. Seldom are they asked to retire to their room so that parents may discuss unpleasant matters.
- Some American parents place unreasonable restrictions on teenagers, treating them as immature and irresponsible. Indian children are subject to less rigorous discipline.
- A little bit of teenage rebellion may even be a good thing. Children gain experience by being independent.

Our daughter Anuradha came through her teenage years without any acrimony. She has been a blessing throughout.

Anuradha graduated from Duke University in 1986 and presently teaches Finance and Accounting

courses at college level. She is married to Sunny and has brought forth three lovely children: Devan, Shivali and Vinay. She is a dedicated mother much like her own mother was. Shully left me in 1986, the result of a fatal automobile accident, described later. Fate is insurmountable. Shully left behind for me the biggest blessing: our daughter Anuradha and now three grandchildren. God takes away with one hand, and rewards with another. My one regret in life is that we did not have more children.



*(L to R) Grand children Devan, Shivali and Vinay*

Anuradha developed writing skills in High School, and worked on the school year book. Anuradha's following essay was published in *The Pensacola News*. The essay tells of her visit, at age 10, to our ancestral village in India. The poignant Essay describes her grandfather.

# Rapport

Monday, December 14, 1981

## Untitled

Like a wise old bird, he perches upon the edge of a cot almost as old as himself, a dirty white turban wrapped around white hair with fuzzy sideburns peeping out from under the cool cotton surrounding the long, wrinkled face. Longer sheets of the material draped around the body hang loosely from the bony structure.

Heat invades every crack and crevice, and the sun bakes the hard, cracked ground. A little girl walks to her grandfather, bends down and touches the floor in front of him. He gently touches her head, giving the customary blessing. As she looks up, she sees that his eyes are heavy with gravity, or is it tears.

Sangita rises and gives him a shy smile. Her cousins call her and so, with another half apologetic smile, she runs off to the stone and dirt street, well worn smooth with the footprints of the many generations before.

Sangita remembers to step over the open gutter. As she glances down, the stench rises to her nostrils. With a grimace of disgust and an extra wide step, almost a jump over the trench, she hurries away with her newly discovered cousins.

After a day of childish play, Sangita returns to the compound. Small flickering bulbs draw the flying dust in the night. The bulbs, along with drooping wires, pass on the secret that electricity has indeed reached the last outpost of semi-civilization. Sangita looks upon all that is around her with contempt, homesick for running water, indoor plumbing and McDonald's hamburgers.

"When are we going home?" she whines pitifully. Her parents look at her, distressed. "Why don't you spend more time with your grandfather? You act like you don't love him."

She looks away guilty. How can she explain that he smells, or at



ANU GOEL

*Born in Buffalo, N.Y., Anu Geol has lived short periods of her life in her parents' country, India. The essay relates the last time she saw her grandfather. He died a few months before they were to return to India. She is a senior at Tate High School.*

least his clothes do. Sangita knows in her heart that she loves him. He knows it too.

The next morning, she goes with her grandfather to his shop. He opens up the back area and prepares some fresh hot tea. Today, his turban and his clothes are really white and the fuzz of sideburns is gone. He puts down a low platform, the size of a bolt of material. Behind this are the metric weights. Sangita plays with them, trying to see how many of the hexagons she can hold, and then comparing them to the tiniest measurement by pretending she is the scale.

In the corner of the cramped quarters is a tall, skinny closet, the width of an extra thin pantry or a grandfather clock. Sangita's grandfather reaches behind this door and takes out a glass jar filled with juicy white

raisins. The jar is opened and given to his granddaughter, who sits in a corner eating them like a monkey. First she examines each one carefully, making sure there is nothing moving on it. Then, after a nibble to see inside and another close examination, she pops it into her tiny mouth. Her grandfather looks on, pleased to see that she is content, at least for the moment.

The child's elder then settles down with his journal, carefully recording entries of the week's transactions. After a lukewarm cup of tea, Sangita "helps" her grandfather

clean up. She wanders around the store looking for dirt on the weights. She then piles them up in a tower. Her grandfather comes back, takes her hand, and they leave, walking back towards the compound.

At last, the long-awaited day arrives. Sangita and her family are finally going home. All of a sudden, the whole village is within the compound, trying to push their way into the small room housing the celebrities. A crowd of faces can be seen through the tiny doorway. Sangita is scared. Tears stream down her face.

The too-big-for-the-street taxi finally arrives, it's mid-size rotundity pushing its way outward where ever space allows. Like the Red Sea, the mass of people separate into a tiny corridor as the family emerges from the room. Many of the persons draw back in awe. Grandfather sits on the cot again, similar to the way he had been sitting when Sangita arrived. One by one, starting with her father, they all bend down and touch his feet. Again, he gives his blessings.

When Sangita's turn comes, she slowly approaches from the side. There are tears in her eyes as she shows her respect in the traditional way and then slowly stands up. Her grandfather catches her hand as she rises and gently places some money in it. She tries to give it back, but at a word from her mother, accepts the gift. A shy smile plays on her face again. He gives her a smile back. Both have tears in their eyes. She slowly walks to the car and turns. They look at each other for a long minute. Each recognizes what they see in the other's heart, tears are there, yes, but there is also love.

## IX. THE SIXTIES AND THE COUNTER-CULTURE

The decade of the 1960s referred to as The Sixties denotes a complex set of cultural and political trends in the United States. Young people began to revolt against the norms of the previous generation, in particular its excessive materialism. They created a “counterculture” focused on sexual freedom, greater rights for women and minorities, experimentation in drug use, and opposition to the government’s heavy military involvement in Vietnam. Zen Buddhism and Hinduism gained new found popularity. The counter-culture festival at Woodstock brought together over 100,000 celebrants. The Buffalo University campus was part of the new movement. The famous beat-poet Allen Ginsburg visited the campus in 1966: he read poetry and chanted Sanskrit mantras to a large student crowd. I shared the stage with him. The counter-culture fascinated me. I helped found the first Hare Krishna temple in Buffalo, described subsequently.

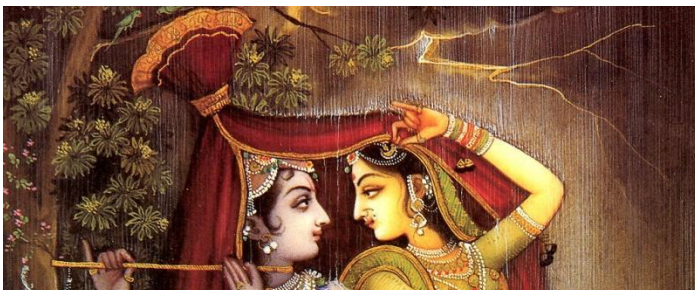
As the war in Vietnam dragged on and the body count climbed, students became a powerful and disruptive force on college campuses. Over 50,000 Americans were killed and many more injured in the Vietnam conflict. The death count among the Vietnamese people was greater: over 2 million killed. The youth of the country, the ones dying at the front, wanted to know what they were fighting for. Not since the Civil War had the country been so divided. The youth opposed the war; the old-guard supported it. Many American families were torn apart. I attended several of the anti-war teach-ins at the Buffalo University campus.

### THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

There has not been a decade like the Sixties. Many young people were drawn to the Eastern religions of Zen Buddhism and Hinduism. The swamis, gurus and maharishis who traveled from India to the US found enthusiastic seekers. Among the more popular gurus included: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (Transcendental Meditation), Swami Chinmaya-nanda (Advaita Vedanta), Vishnu Devananda (Divine Life Society), Swami Muktananda (Siddha Yoga), Swami Rama (the Himalayan Institute), and Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta (Hare Krishnas).

I was drawn to the Hare Krishnas. Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in 1966, popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement. After a turbulent sea-passage from India, the Swami landed in Boston in 1965. He moved to the lower East Side at 26 Second Avenue in Manhattan in 1966. Soon, he had a following; hippies were among the first to follow him. He preached a life style free of alcohol, drugs and illicit sex. Chanting the holy names of the Lord was the recipe given by him to cure modern ailments of an indulgent life style. The devotees sing aloud or chant quietly the Maha-Mantra (the Great Mantra) which contains the names of Lord Krishna and Rama:

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna  
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare  
Hare Rama Hare Rama  
Rama Rama Hare Hare*



Derived from the teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in 16<sup>th</sup> century Bengal, the

Swami emphasized the practice of Bhakti Yoga, the path of love and devotion. The chanting of the holy names is an effective and easy path to Shri Krishna, the Supreme Godhead. The holy name is Lord's sound incarnation. Since the Lord is the absolute whole, there is no difference between His holy name and His transcendental form. One can easily approach the Lord by prayer and by devotional music.

*Krishna and Radha—the Divine Couple*

The Beatles exerted an enormous influence on youth in the Sixties. George Harrison of the Beatles helped in part in popularizing the Hare Krishna movement. His 1971 hit "My Sweet Lord" includes a recitation of the Hare Krishna Maha-Mantra, as does John Lennon's song: "Give Peace a Chance." George Harrison donated substantial money for the ISKCON temple in England.

**MY INVOLVEMENT WITH HARE KRISHNAS:** Poet Allen Ginsberg brought the Hare Krishna message to Buffalo campus, as he chanted the Sanskrit hymns. He told me about the Swami Prabhupada. Impressed with what I heard and saw, I traveled to New York City in 1966 to meet the Swami. I listened to the Swami's discourses over three days. I requested Swamiji to visit Buffalo for a series of lectures at UB. The Swami deputed the very talented Rupanuga Das to the Buffalo assignment. Rupanuga stayed at our apartment as a guest for three months. His bi-weekly lectures and devotional music attracted many students. Gradually, the group grew in size and a temple was opened near the campus. Swamiji came to Buffalo to inaugurate the temple in 1967.

When Shully first met Swamiji in Buffalo, her hands trembled as she bowed down to touch his feet. She was devout and spiritual to the core. She inherited this trait from her father, a well-known singer of *Bhajans* (devotional songs), and a devotee of Swami Ramdas. The Buffalo Hare Krishna temple expanded rapidly. Several of the early joiners rose to leadership positions in the movement: Bhurijan, Bhagwan Das, Trivikrama Das, and Rupanuga Das. I have continued to associate with Hare Krishna devotees. Annually, my present wife Damini and I visit the Hare Krishna Temple in Alachua near Gainesville, FL. Lord Krishna's birthday is celebrated at the Temple on a grand scale, with over a thousand people in attendance. Various stalls depict Krishna's pastimes and His life story. Devotional music and dances fill the air. Miss Anapayini and her troupe dance the classical Bharat Natyam, a feast for the eyes. The Temple has an active lunch distribution program at the University of Florida. We make regular monetary contributions to the Temple.

Congregational chanting or singing of the Sanskrit mantras is an important practice among the devotees. This is done in temples and also in public places. The practice of public singing attracts new comers. Devotees also practice meditation and chanting on a rosary.

Today, ISKCON (International Society for Krishna consciousness) has a global reach. It has over 550



temples, 60 farm communities and 50 schools around the world. Russia and Eastern Europe have been opened up after the fall of Communism. ISKCON has an active Food for Life program. Over 2 million free meals are served in over 60 countries. The large amount of Krishna-Radha artwork that devotees have produced is now spread globally and is much admired. This truly is grand.

*Hare Krishna congregational chanting, image from the web*

## X. THE JOY OF TEACHING

### 1969-1979

During this time . . .

- A computer text-editing system was developed
- President Richard Nixon was forced to resign, 1974
- Prime Minister Indira Gandhi lost elections, 1977
- Dow Jones Average hovered around 850
- With the founding of OPEC, gasoline prices rose to \$1.00 per gallon
- The Monarchy was toppled in Iran and an Islamic regime established

University-level teaching in the US is among the best career paths one can choose. Young students bring gaiety and charm to the campus. There is little bureaucratic interference in a professor's academic life. It is the professor, not an administrator, who decides on the course syllabi, the reading materials and finally the student grades. There is endless opportunity to enjoy concerts, plays and sports on a college campus, with little or no cost. University-level teaching is intellectually challenging and financially rewarding. I had a very fulfilling career as a university professor. However, I had a bad start.

### A BAD START

I accepted a job at Niagara University, NY, in 1966 before I finished the Ph.D. degree. The job required me to teach courses in Western Civilization, a subject of which I had meager knowledge. I recovered but the experience left a bad taste. I vowed never to teach in a subject that did not interest me or in which I commanded little knowledge. This is how it came about.

One fine afternoon in the month of August 1966, Dr. McGuire of Niagara University knocked at my apartment door. He explained the purpose of his visit. A faculty member he had recruited to teach History courses in the Fall semester was not going to show up. Would I consider joining the faculty? He had examined my credentials, read the evaluations given by my professors, and found these satisfactory. I told him that I was not looking for a job just then. I was in the beginning stages of writing the dissertation; finishing it was my priority No. 1. Taking a teaching position at that stage would set me behind.

Dr. McGuire made the offer attractive: a three-course per semester teaching load in place of the normal four courses. I could teach classes over three days per week, to free time to work on writing my dissertation. Plus I would have the summers off. He offered \$7,500 salary for the 9-month academic year, a decent figure for a beginning instructor in 1966.

I consulted with Shully about the pros and cons. Accepting the position would interfere with my first priority of completing the Ph.D. degree. I might never finish. Many college teachers were ABD's, "All but Dissertation." I did not want to join their ranks. Further, I lacked knowledge in world history, the subject

matter that I was being asked to teach. On the other hand, the salary and teaching schedule were more than satisfactory. I might not get a job if I waited two years to complete the degree. The salary offered would move us out of poverty. After much back and forth, I called Dr. McGuire and accepted the position.

I had a very difficult time teaching the courses on Western Civilization. Having completed my undergraduate education in India, I had not studied Western history in any detail. I knew very little about such basic topics as: the Greek City states, the rise of the Roman Empire, Gaelic Wars, the birth of Christianity, the establishment of the Church, the Holy Roman Empire, the Renaissance, Reformation, etc. Even though I spent a great deal of time in preparing for lectures, yet I never felt in command of the subject I taught. It was painful to walk to the classroom. I thought I was not cut out for a teaching career.

College administrators are under pressure to have the classes met. As long as a teacher is in the classroom, the bureaucratic requirement is fulfilled. Professors sometimes teach subjects they are not qualified to teach. Both the professor and students suffer.

Chairperson Dr. McGuire was privy to my problems. He switched me to teach courses in my own field of political science for the second year. My performance changed. Gradually, I gained confidence. I vowed never to teach in a subject in which I had little expertise. I taught at Niagara University for three years, 1966-69. A bad beginning can be overcome with luck and due diligence. Lessons learnt:

1. Do not get into a bad situation, if you can help it.
2. If you find yourself in a bad situation, persist. It will pass.

**Niagara Falls.** Buffalo, where we lived, was within 20 miles of the famous Niagara Falls, a geological wonder and one of the most famous Waterfalls in the world. The number of visitors in 2015 is estimated at 30 million. The best known attraction is “Maid of the Mist”, a boat cruise below the waterfalls. Niagara Falls was once the pleasure and honeymoon capital of the nation. The 1953 hit film *Niagara* starring Marilyn Munro was shot on location there. When out of town guests visited us, we would drive them to see the famous Niagara Falls. During our 6 year stay in Buffalo (1963-69), we did not visit the Falls more than 5 or 6 times. The saying “Prophets are not honored in their own hometown” applies also to local attractions—we do not always appreciate the wonders that lie in our backyard. I wish we had enjoyed the Falls more often than we did.

## **MOVE TO SUNNY FLORIDA**

The decades of 60s and 70s were an excellent period to find a college-level employment. Baby boomers entered colleges in droves, in part on the GI bill. The 20-year period between 1946 and 1965 is generally said to encompass the baby-boom years. An estimated 77 million Americans were born during this period, a high number. Colleges expanded their enrollments to meet the demand.

I had four job offers upon completing my degree in 1969: Niagara University (where I already taught), Pennsylvania State University, Loyola University of Los Angeles, and the University of West Florida (UWF) at Pensacola. I chose UWF for several reasons: the University’s bright new campus which opened in 1967; the Florida warm weather; the immense beauty of the blue waters of Pensacola beaches; the

substantial \$11,500 academic-year salary. Further, real estate prices were cheaper in Pensacola than elsewhere; owning a new home would cost less. The UWF's Political Science Department was chaired by Dr. Donald Freeman, a friend of Dr. Lester Milbrath, my mentor and thesis guide at UB. Also, other faculty members at UWF were young, about the same age as I.

Shully and I flew to Pensacola for the interviews spread over three days. Selection for the position was a rigorous affair. The interview process included meetings with the Chairperson, the Dean, and the President of the University. I was asked to deliver a lecture to students to assess my teaching ability. Part of the interview process also included attending a cocktail party in order to assess the candidate's social skills. I recall that an eminent senior level professor was interviewed for a high level position at Pensacola in subsequent years. He drank too much at the cocktail party and flirted heavily with a young lady. He did not get the job. Shully was my strength in social gatherings. Her natural grace and beauty attracted many admirers. My mentor Dr. Milbrath's friendship with the UWF Chairperson Donald Freeman also played a role in my selection. American university recruitment system is very much a system of "who knows who."

Simultaneously, Shully was interviewed at Pensacola Junior College for a teaching position in Computer Science. Computer Science was a new field of study and demand was high. They offered her a position at \$8,000 for 9-month academic year salary, which she accepted. After accepting the offers, we went house hunting with a real estate agent. There were many houses to choose from in all price ranges. We liked a newly constructed house within two miles of the campus. Having grown up in India, my bargaining skills were excellent. We bought the brand new 3-Bedroom 2-Bath carpeted and paneled 1850 square-foot home for \$26,000, a price that was \$1,900 lower than the asking price.

Within a week, we had two jobs and a brand new house.

We packed our household goods in Buffalo, said good-byes to friends and arrived at Pensacola on July 18, 1969. Two days later on July 20, the **Apollo 11** space flight landed on the moon. As we did not yet have a TV set, a neighbor lent us a small portable TV. We were glued to the TV screen. Neil Armstrong stepped off his craft and uttered this famous line: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind". The line would go down in history as a memorable line. The lunar mission represented a victory for the U.S. in competition with the Soviet Union. Apollo 11 fulfilled President John F. Kennedy's goal of reaching the moon by the end of the 1960's decade. There was jubilation in the nation comparable to none I had seen.

We settled in our new home. We learnt later that the real-estate Agent, who negotiated the sale of the house, had gone around the neighborhood to canvass nearby residents. The Agent wanted to know if an Asian Indian family would be acceptable in the neighborhood. Since the house was sold to us, evidently no body seriously objected. Pensacola is in the Deep South. Lunch counters, bathrooms and schools were still segregated by race in that time period (1960s). The following incident further reflects the racial views of that period.

Since, both Shully and I worked full-time, we hired Bernice to take care of our two 5-year old girls. Bernice was a Black woman. The next door neighbor saw Bernice in the company of our two girls. Assuming that a Black family had moved in the neighborhood, she was distressed. A week later, the



neighbor met my wife in the yard. She was much released to learn that we were East Indian, and that the Black woman taking care of our daughters was a maid.

#### OUR MAID BERNICE

My daughter Anuradha and her cousin Chitra, both 5, enrolled in a neighborhood elementary school in Pensacola. As both Shully and I worked full time, we hired Bernice to take care of the girls and clean the house. Bernice, an African-American thirtyish woman, was an amazing care-taker. She cared for the girls as if they were her own. She cleaned the house, washed and ironed the clothes, and cooked a meal if we asked her to do so. She prepared awesome turnip greens, corn bread and fried chicken. She worked 20 hours a week for us and was paid \$30. She wore a white uniform. She took pride in being a housekeeper and a child-care provider. She bonded with the girls.

Once she asked permission to take the girls to her home for an overnight stay. We saw no reason to say 'no'. The girls spent the night at her house in the black neighborhood in Pensacola. The next morning the girls were taken around the neighborhood and 'shown off.' Many ah's and ooh's were uttered by the onlookers in the neighborhood. The girls enjoyed the adulation. They returned home the next day tugging onto toys given to them by Bernice and her neighbors. The girls still talk about the fabulous experience.

## XI. HAPPY DAYS

The decade of the 1970s was a high point in our lives. We had two new jobs, a brand new house and two



lovely girls in tow, daughter Anuradha and niece Chitra, both in elementary school. We loved our house with shiny new appliances, new carpets, fresh white paint and wood-paneled Family Room. This was a departure from living to-date in the older dingy rented apartments.

The UWF campus was new and shiny. Class sizes were small at 15-20 students. Numerous dinner and cocktail invitations came our way. Every new candidate who was interviewed for a job at the University meant attending a cocktail and a dinner party. We ourselves entertained a lot. Shully developed skills at cooking Indian dishes for a dozen or more guests. She was always a gracious host.

Once a year, I invited my students to our home for an outdoor cookout. Students valued such home contact. They wrote letters of appreciation to us, sometimes years after having graduated.

*At the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.*

## THE SIXTIES TURMOIL COMES TO PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

Pensacola is in the Deep South. It is home to the Naval Air Station, a large training facility. Pensacola touts itself as a military town. The town's conservative character is well-known. The University of West Florida did not escape the Sixties student turmoil. Several antiwar gatherings were organized on the campus. I grew a beard, the sign for left-leaning ideology. The Political Science department on campus was divided between liberals and conservatives. I belonged to the liberal wing. Two History professors who were ring-leaders of the antiwar protests on campus were forced to resign. I supported the liberal cause but was not a ring-leader.

Nationally also, the field of Political Science was split between radical younger scholars and the traditionalist old guard. Several new activist groups were born in the discipline: Caucus for a New Political Science, Women's Caucus for Political Science, and the Black Political Science Caucus. I took a leading role in organizing the Foreign-Born Political Scientists Caucus in 1972. I was elected as its first Chair for three years. Subsequently, the Caucus was renamed as Asian Political Scientists.

The decade of the Seventies brought to the Pensacola campus a number of Black or Afro-American students. A Black Students Union (BSU) was organized in 1972. I served as the founding Faculty Sponsor and Advisor to the club. Willie Junior, a student in political science, was elected as the first BSU President. Willie Junior was a colorful person and possessed a sweet tongue. He entered local politics after graduation and was elected as the County Commissioner, a position with high local visibility and power. He achieved a degree of fame and notoriety. Unfortunately, Junior was indicted in a money kick-back scheme. He committed suicide in 2004.

Afro-American students frequently enrolled in my classes. With some exceptions, they found it hard to cope with the rigors of college education. Sometimes I awarded them grades they did not always deserve. Black students originating from the West Indies were altogether different. They worked hard at studies and also moved about with confidence. Bibi and Richard were two of my star West Indian students. Bibi, the daughter of a Trinidadian Black father and an Indian mother, possessed excellent mathematical skills; she topped the technical research methods course. Richard from Barbados wrote excellent English prose; he was much in demand to improve student writing.

## TENURED AND PROMOTED

I moved rapidly along the career path at the University, and received Tenure as well as Promotion to the rank of Associate Professor in 1973, mere 4 years since I joined the University. A tenured professor has a guarantee of employment. The tenure system is based on the principle of academic freedom. It protects professors against reprisal for controversial theories that they may advance. Society benefits by a system of free inquiry.

Promotion to the Full Professor rank—the highest—came five years later in 1978. My rapid promotion, ahead of my peers by a decade, gave me confidence. Promotion at universities is based on three factors: teaching effectiveness, professional service and publications.

1. Teaching Effectiveness. Seventy to 80 percent of the students ranked my teaching as “Excellent or Very Good”—the two top categories on a 5-point scale. I received University’s “Distinguished Teaching Award,” and the State’s “Golden Apple Award.” Selection for teaching awards is made by students.
2. Professional Service. I served on numerous college committees, including a stint as chairperson of the College Faculty Council. In addition, I delivered numerous speeches at public forums on national and international subject matter.
3. Publications. Among the three criteria for promotion, this is the hardest one to fulfill. Research and writing is a grinding work, requiring many hours of labor. Getting one’s research published is a further difficulty. The number of journals available in the social sciences is rather limited. I established a solid record in research early in my career. I published five books and numerous research articles in high quality journals. The books were reviewed favorably. See: <http://uwf.edu/lgoel/documents/Vita.pdf> for a list of my publications.

Writing clear English text is not my forte. I struggle with it and spend many hours in writing a good draft. Friend Nancy Whitelaw, author of many books, helped me improve my draft for one of my books: *Political Science Research: A Methods Handbook* (Iowa State University Press, 1988). She took my drafts, rearranged the paragraphs and improved the writing style. She upgraded the text even though she knew little of the technical subject matter. Good writing skills can be learned. Students should take writing courses. Also, a good editor is worth his/her weight in gold.

The year 1996-97 was a high mark in my career: I received both the TIP Award in distinguished teaching, and the highly competitive PEP award in research. Both awards were accompanied with significant salary enhancement. I floated in air when the news came. I wish Shully had been there to share my

happiness. She was the wind beneath my wings. I lost her in an automobile accident in 1986, described later.

## AMERICAN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Few career paths are as fulfilling as university-level teaching. American universities are world class; few countries can match the quality of American higher education. Both China and India aspire to develop a quality university system. Whether they will succeed remains yet to be seen. Universities are expensive to establish and to run. Also, quality education requires free inquiry. Governmental and religious interference often mar free inquiry. American higher education is distinguished by several positive attributes. Three factors are highlighted here.

1. The course syllabi, readings and grades are controlled by teachers without interference from higher administration or external sources. This fosters originality. Professors sometimes take unpopular stands on controversial subjects. The tenure system protects them. A college or university is an open community, a place where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is encouraged.
2. Promotion and salary are based on documented performance in the three areas of teaching, service and research, not on the mere number of years of service. A junior faculty member may earn a higher salary than an older senior member, based on productivity. Evaluations of faculty are done by peers (colleagues), rather than administrators. The system fosters creativity.
3. American universities own huge endowments, exceeding billions of dollars in some cases. Rich alumni donate large sums of money to their alma mater. This provides independence. The total value of an institution's cash and investments is referred to as the endowment. Harvard University's endowment exceeds \$40 billion and Princeton's \$20 billion (2019 data). These are huge numbers, larger than even the wealth in many countries.
4. The University of West Florida has a respectable endowment for a new university, running into tens of millions of dollars. It received a \$15 million donation from a single benefactor some years ago. He left his entire estate to the University.

I feel privileged to have taught at the University of West Florida for 34 years. I loved the recognition and status that came along with being a university professor. With one or two exceptions, I had great colleagues to work with. Dinners and cocktail parties added charm.

Students valued my teaching and mentorship. See here: "My Favorite Professor" by Belinda Gelman.

**Then and Now.** Since his appointment in 1978 to the UWF faculty, Dr. Goel has made lasting impressions on students.

### MY FAVORITE PROFESSOR

Lal Goel was one of my favorite professors. He taught me about international relations in a way that kept my rapt attention and made me feel special, although I was fully aware that he made each of his students feel the same.

His expectations were clear, his requirements tough, his demeanor engaging. I have no doubt his gift of teaching touched and inspired every student in our class the same way it touched and inspired me. I learned from him about the nuances and sensitivities regarding different cultures and gained understanding of why senseless wars raged in far-flung areas of our world. I use the term 'our world' because that is what he made it for us—ours to live, to choose, to grow, and to increase understanding across seemingly insurmountable boundaries.

Belinda Gelman  
Director, Public Affairs and  
Marketing

## FACULTY PROFILE

### GOEL BRINGS GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE TO UWF

**F**lorida sunshine is an amenity that draws many to our shores. M. Lal Goel, UWF professor of government and director of international studies, was working on his doctorate at State University of New York in Buffalo in 1970 when he and his wife decided to seek a milder climate. He applied for a faculty position at UWF.

"The search committee took me to the beaches the first day, showed me the big oak trees with Spanish moss along Scenic Highway, then brought me to the campus, and I fell in love with it."

His wife, Shully, was offered a job teaching computer science at Pensacola Junior College and, within three days, they had two jobs and a new home.

Things had not always come so easily. Born and raised on the plains of Punjab in northern India, Goel walked three miles in 110-degree heat to a one-room school where there were no chairs, benches or desks. Students wrote their lessons with chalk on hand-held slates or with their fingers in the sand.

When he and his wife decided to come to the United States, neither had the money for airfare.

"With God's grace, the relatives and well-wishers came to help, and the fares were raised. We landed in New York with exactly \$5 to spare in our pockets."

In the university's 29-year history, fewer than a half-dozen faculty members have been recognized for excellence both in research and teaching. Goel is one of them. In March 1995 he was honored to receive a Distinguished Teaching Award.



## XII. CLIMBING THE ECONOMIC LADDER

### 1980-1992

During this time . . .

- President Ronald Reagan occupied the White House, 1981-88
- PM Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, 1984
- Apple II, the first micro computer with 64K memory, sold for \$3,200
- Japanese autos overtook American-made cars
- The OPEC rose to prominence; Gas \$1.12/gallon
- Iran became an Islamic Republic with Ayatollah Khomeini at its helm, 1980
- Dow Jones 1,500 to 1,955
- Milk \$1.90/gallon; eggs .87/dozen, postage stamp .22 cents

One can rise from poverty to wealth in America. Its land mass is huge and the room for expansion is endless. Natural resources are abundant and technology is superb. The free enterprise system rewards entrepreneurship. I was its beneficiary. I rose to wealth via real estate investments.

Shully worked with the US Navy as a highly paid Systems Analyst. I taught at the University of West Florida. With two professional salaries, our financial position was sound. We lived on one salary and saved the other. This came naturally to us. Having grown up under financial straits, living frugally was part of our DNA. We did not skimp on anything essential or shirk our social and family responsibility, we just did not waste. We built respectable savings within ten years of work.

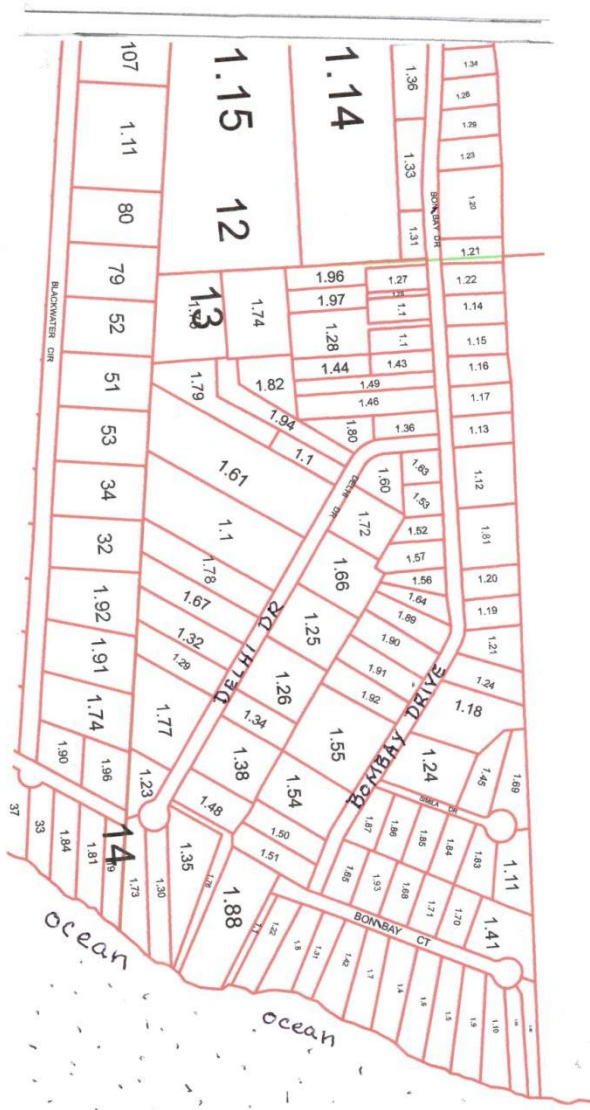
This led me to dabble in real estate. Several faculty members were organized into a real estate investment group, including me. We bought a large 200 acre parcel of land. The intent was to subdivide the acreage into smaller 1-5 acre parcels and sell these at heavy profit. But this venture turned sour and we lost money. The land we bought was wet and unsuitable for development. We bought it without doing due diligence and depending entirely too much on the advice of a real estate broker, who earned a commission on the sale.

With this negative experience, my partners got completely out of real estate business. I used the experience as a learning tool. An opportunity came to buy an 80 acre parcel of waterfront property in 1979. With a swinging machete in hand, I walked the property up and down through thick foliage and heavy underbrush to make sure it was high and dry and not wet and low. I did not wish to repeat the previous error and get stuck with unsuitable wet land. I walked the land several times. I also rode my horse (a Tennessee-Walker) through the thick foliage to make certain about the quality of the land. I was fearful about encountering snakes or other reptiles, found in Florida beachfront lands. Nothing unpleasant happened. I bought the 80 acre parcel fronting on Blackwater Bay with 20 percent down and the rest on mortgage. The investment proved to be very profitable.

I went to work to develop the 80-acre parcel into 100 smaller building lots, with 15 lots fronting on the ocean. Three roads were constructed in the Subdivision: Bombay Drive, Delhi Drive and Simla Court. The water and power lines were put in. Land development rules were flexible in 1980 in Santa Rosa County, Florida. The 15 waterfront lots were the first to sell at prices varying from \$15,000 to \$39,000

per lot in 1980s. Prices for a waterfront lot rose to \$100,000 in 2010 and higher after that. The prices for the interior lots rose from \$4,000 to \$20,000 over the succeeding years. Unfortunately, I sold all the waterfront lots at the lower price to generate cash to pay on loan installments. Even at lower prices, I made a hefty profit, exceeding a million. And, this was in 1980s.

BOMBAY ESTATES



The profit I made led me to buy additional following parcels of land for development and resale:

- 197 acre farm in Santa Rosa County, Fl. Punjab Road was constructed within it.
- 20 acre rural parcel developed as Ladda Court, after the name of my village.
- 40 acre parcel known as Hickory Heights.
- 80 acre tract on Munson Hwy, subdivided into 1-4 acre parcels.

All the above located in Santa Rosa County, Florida.

- Two 10 acre parcels in Okaloosa County, Florida.

Bulk of the real estate has been sold over the years. Some twenty lots were donated to temples and religious organizations.

Two images of the roads constructed are given hereunder.

## Punjab Road in Florida



### **Joy of Work**

Property development work was a source of pure joy for me. I would spend hours supervising the work of land surveyors, road builders, and water-pipe installers. Often I would provide lunch to the workers. This was a throwback to my childhood days in rural Punjab, where laborers are usually provided lunch. I was following in Father's footsteps, just on a different scale. For example, Father would buy a grove of trees and have them hewn for lumber and firewood. It took several hours to bring down and slice up a tree with axes and hand-pulled saws. This was before the age of gasoline powered chainsaws. As a pre-teen, I supplied water and lunch to the workers. Providing lunch was part of the wages. I would trek some two miles from home to deliver lunch. I saw the hard labor put in by the workers. I felt bonded with the soil. I watched my father enter into business negotiations, which helped sharpen my business skills. Sadly today, the youth often do not work alongside their fathers.

In addition to land and acreage, I bought and sold several rental properties. The rental properties consisted of homes, two apartment complexes and a 9-store shopping center. Each rental property I bought gave me headache. Rent collections and making repairs are a challenge. Tenants are notorious in



skipping rents and in tearing up the place. Finding reliable repair crew is also a challenge. The rental managers I hired did not always perform. I do not recommend the faint hearted to get into rental real estate business. A mighty cool head is needed. I liquidated most of the rental properties a number of years ago.

There is no free lunch. Real estate activity required many hours of work. But I rose from childhood poverty to comfort. Two factors explain my success in real estate.

One, my wife Shully displayed full faith and confidence as I “wheeled and dealed” in real estate. Never did she interfere or question the wisdom or lack thereof about a particular deal. Remember that one-half the money I was playing with came from her earnings. She gave me support when it got rough. She stood by my side during a court case. Litigation is stressful, even when one is on solid ground. We won. Behind every success is the hand of a loving and caring wife. Never was a truer statement made.

Two, I had a flexible working schedule at the University. University teaching requires approximately 20 hours per week of presence on campus. This consists of 9 hours of classroom teaching and the rest for consulting with students and attending meetings. Many additional tasks of preparing syllabi, grading exam papers and writing articles may be done at home during the evenings and weekends. Thus, I could spend part of the day-time hours on real estate activity. The hardest part of a professor’s job is research and publications. “Publish or perish” philosophy governs many a professor’s life. Fortunately, I established a solid record of research output during the early years of my career. I was promoted to the rank of Full Professor in 1978, the highest rank. The real estate development activity began in 1980.

### **XIII. HINDU FAMILY: A MUTUAL AID SOCIETY**

The extended Hindu family is a mutual-aid society. The term Hindu here includes Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and other dharmic communities in India. Members pull together in good times and bad. If parents lack the resources to marry off their daughter and provide the expected dowry, extended family members chip in. A deserving student wanting to attend college but having no wherewithal may be similarly helped. The Hindu extended family includes not only one’s spouse and parents but also brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and even more distant relatives. To give someone the status of a near relative is to bestow honor on him/her. Thus friends would call each other brothers. A kind older lady would be addressed as “mother.” Mahatma Gandhi was affectionately called “Bapu”, i.e. father.

The mutual aid society is an ingenious institution going back centuries. I was its big beneficiary. A previous section described my circumstances. No proper school existed in my native village. Father was keen on having me schooled. Various make-shift arrangements for this purpose did not succeed. The custom of family responsibility came to the rescue. I was sent to live with my older married sister and her husband in the nearby town of Sangrur, which had a school and a 4-year college. I lived cost-free under their roof for several years. Living under someone else’s roof is never pleasant. I was not happy and I suffered. But I got educated. Later, when I got ready to go to the US for higher education, members of the extended family contributed to pay for the steamship passage to the United States. I

raised Rs 2,500 with contributions ranging from Rs 20 to 500. This was in 1956 when a rupee was worth a lot more than presently.

This debt I repaid when my turn came. Shully and I helped fund the higher education of three of our relatives: my younger brother Krishan, our nephew Sandeep, and niece Chitra.

Shully and I also sponsored Hiroko, a Japanese female high school student for a two-month stay in our home in 1981. This was under the American Field Service (AFS). The AFS provides inter-cultural learning opportunities to high school students. Some 2,500 students came to the U.S. in 2008, and an equal number of American students traveled abroad. Hiroko attended Tate High School in Pensacola. As she was only a couple of years older than my daughter, she addressed me as Dad, which pleased me. Hiroko reciprocated our hospitality. During my teaching assignment in Tokyo in 2000, she invited me for a day-long visit to her home. We exchange Christmas cards regularly.

We also contributed substantially to the cost of marriage of several of my nieces in India. It is well known that marrying off daughters is an expensive affair among Hindus in Punjab. Hugh feasts are given and the bride is provided with a proper dowry—cash, gold, household furniture and gifts to the in-laws. Families compete with one another in one-upmanship. It is a burdensome practice, but the custom of giving and taking dowries is ascendant rather than declining. It is more prevalent in North India than in the South. Government has anti-dowry legislation on its books. Religious leaders often speak against it. Yet, the practice of dowry continues.

Shully and I set up a Trust fund to pay for the household expenses of Shully's parents in Bombay. My father-in-law retired on a decent pension, but by no means sufficient in the inflationary cycle in India. He received a monthly allowance from the Trust that we set up for him during his life.

We also donate to Hindu charities and other religious bodies, and also to my alma mater: the University of Oregon and the University at Buffalo. Shully was more generous than I was. Helping others came naturally to her. Also, she was not judgmental. She did not fret or fume at the folly of others. She never forgot our humble origins. We succeeded beyond all expectation. Many people helped us along the way. We stood on their shoulders.

“Give and it shall be given you. He that waters shall be watered himself.” These statements are true. The more you give, the more you receive. My life experience is a testimony to this truth. The more we gave, the more we received. Life's joys and good fortune come to us as a consequence of the good acts performed in this life or in past lives. The law of Karma holds.

#### **Our Home in the Country**



We built a farm house in Pensacola outskirts on 10 acres of land. A swimming pool, a fish-pond and a stable for horses were also constructed.

We kept two horses and I learned to ride. One of the horses was named “vayu” or wind. The second horse was named “Chetak,” after the famous steed of Rana Pratap in Indian history. The image shown here is of the Tennessee-Walking horse, known for its smooth ride.

Property values were relatively inexpensive in Pensacola in the 1970s and 1980s. Such luxuries were easy to obtain.



Our Farm Home in the country



A ‘holi’ party around our pool. The holi is the Indian spring festival of colors.



**Another image of the 'holi party'.**

#### **XIV. THE GOOD DIE YOUNG**

The most ordinary day can turn into the most tragic day in a moment. Dec 30, 1986 was such a day. Darling Shully was taken away from us. Age 47!

The day started with the usual slow pace during the Winter holiday season: I got up around 7, then a walk in the woods adjoining our home, followed with a cup of hot tea and a small breakfast. With the University closed for Christmas holidays, I worked at home writing a textbook published two years later. Shully followed her usual routine: a shower, a cup of hot tea and quickly out of the door to her office.

Shully unexpectedly returned home around noon during lunch hour. She returned to pick up a dish that she had prepared. The dish was to be delivered to her co-worker Carol for the New Year Eve party. Shully spent only a few minutes at home. Before driving away, she came over to my study-table and wrapped her arms around my neck. I put my arm around her waist and hugged her back. After exchanging some pleasantries, she drove away. Nothing unusual in the entire routine.

An hour or so later, two Highway Patrolmen knocked at the door. I walked out to chat with them. They were circumspect about the purpose of their visit. We lived in the country; homes were far apart, spread out. I thought they needed to locate a particular address in the neighborhood. They inquired my name and if I was related to Shully. After going through such preliminaries they gently broke the news: there had been an accident, and Shully was involved in the mishap. After waiting several more minutes, they said that Shully was not expected to live. The news did not sink into me. I just stood there expressionless, without saying much at all. It did not seem real.

The Troopers asked me to call a neighbor who would sit with me. They did not wish to leave me alone. I was still dumbfounded. Mechanically and without much emotion, I called our neighbors Tom and Dana. When the neighbors arrived, the Troopers informed them that Mrs. Goel had in fact been killed. They provided additional small detail about the fatal accident. Then they left. Everyone was at loss for words. All of us just sat in the living room dumbfounded without saying very much at all.

Daughter Anuradha was out of the home on an errand for me. I called her and asked to return home right away. She returned soon after. I thanked Tom and Dana and indicated that I wanted to be alone with my daughter. I told my daughter about the Troopers' visit and that Mom was involved in an accident and that she had not survived. It took a while for the news to sink in. Anuradha then broke down. Neither of us knew what to do or how to proceed. There was no point going to the accident scene. The Troopers said that the mangled Honda Prelude had been hauled away and that Shully had been taken to the morgue.

I asked Anuradha to call a few of our close Indian friends. Within minutes Usha and Nalini were at our door. Evening TV news picked up the story, with pictures of the accident. Visitors started pouring in, and continued throughout the evening and for the next 2 days. There was crying and sobbing.

#### THE ACCIDENT

Shully was following a heavy-duty crane on Pine Forest Road heading south in Pensacola. Shully got into the left lane and passed the slow moving crane. About a minute later, an auto coming from the opposite side heading north made an illegal left turn. She hit Shully's southbound Honda car on the rear fender. This put the Honda in a spin and in the path of the oncoming heavy-duty crane. Even though 135 feet separated the crane from the Honda, the operator could not stop the heavy vehicle in time. The vehicle probably had poor brakes. Shully's Honda was badly hit. She had no chance of surviving. We are thankful that she did not suffer.

Shully's remains were cremated according to Hindu rites. The ashes were offered to the Gulf waters at the National Seashore in Pensacola. It was a sunny and unusually calm day. Rand Hicks accompanied us as we offered the ashes into the Gulf waters. Rand, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, said that he witnessed the Divine Mother rising from the waters and enfolding Shully in Her arms. This was solacing to hear.

A ceremony to commemorate Shully's life was held a few days later at a local funeral home. Rand Hicks gave the eulogy, reading from the Bhagavad Gita.

It is the body that has its end in time, not the soul. The Soul does not perish when the body perishes. The Soul is eternal without beginning and without end. As a person leaves an old garment and puts on one that is new, the Soul leaves this body and enters one that is new. Weapons cannot hurt the Spirit nor fire burn It. Beyond the powers of sword and fire, beyond the powers of deep waters and howling wind, the Soul is everlasting, even-present and ever One. Grieve not. Shully lives.

The Unity Church Minister Joan Corbin followed with comforting and uplifting words. Friend Kiran Senapati sang a devotional Hindi song. Several hundred people attended the service, including Shully's professional colleagues and members of the Indian community. It was the largest crowd in the funeral home's 15-year history, said the funeral home Director.

Shully's accidental death was covered in the local press. Given below are three accounts.

# Many mourn 'most giving' friend Goel

By Cheryl Kammermeyer  
News Journal

An intelligent, caring and compassionate woman, whose life so sweetly graced others, is gone. Shully H. Goel died Tuesday in an automobile accident at the age of 47.

Goel, of 1298 Highway 97, had just had lunch at home with her husband, M. Lal Goel, and was driving back to work at Saufley Field when the accident occurred.

"She was the most giving person that we know," her husband said. "Everyone will tell you that. She was committed to spreading international understanding, and she hosted so many foreign students. She enjoyed life."



Shully H. Goel

Goel was born in Bombay, India, and received a bachelor's degree there from Bombay University. She later

See GOEL'S, 2B

ial Friday, January, 2, 1987

## Goel's kindness remembered

GOEL'S/from 1B

received a bachelor's degree there from Bombay University. She later received a master's degree in computer science from the State University of New York. At the time of her death, she was acting department head at the Naval Education Training Program Management Support Activities at Saufley Field. She taught computer science at Pensacola Junior College for one year in the late 1970s.

Mr. Goel, also from East India, is a political science professor at the University of West Florida. His colleagues and friends recalled Mrs. Goel:

"She was the type of person that was an asset to any group of people she was with, whether socially or for business," said Penny Witt, wife of UWF's political science chairman, James Witt. "I remember her as a wonderful mother and as a beautiful, gracious hostess.

Whether she entertained for colleagues and friends or for visiting dignitaries, everybody always remembered her. She cooked both Indian and American food for her guests — and always plenty of both. She was so warm. She always had a big hug and kiss for everybody."

"While she had an excellent education and was extraordinarily competent, she also had a real concern for people and was very humanistically oriented," said James Munro, a UWF professor.

News Journal columnist Dot Brown recalled working with Goel at PJC: "I became friends with her the year she worked at PJC, and she was such a delight. I remember what a loving, devoted couple the Goels were. She told me when she and her husband first met they had to speak English because they didn't understand each other's dialects. She always called him 'Darling' when they spoke. She said when he took her home to meet his family, his entire village came out to look at her. She was beautiful."

Goel was deeply involved with spiritual teachings of the Integral Knowledge Study Center in Pensacola. There she worked with friend Rand Hicks, its co-founder and president of its board.

"Shully had such grace," Hicks said. "She said the word that could restore harmony."

In addition to her involvement with the study center, Goel enjoyed cooking, sewing, singing and she enjoyed beach walking and nature hikes with her husband. Mrs. Goel helped found the India Association in Pensacola, a group comprising about 100 Indian families.

Goel is survived by her husband, M. Lal Goel, of Pensacola; a daughter, Anuradha C. Goel, of Pensacola; her parents, Ganesh and Vimal Heblekar, of Bombay, India; and Chitre Haldipitur, a niece, of Pensacola.

Funeral services will be today at 2 p.m. at the Cedar Hill Chapel.



**JEAN STREETMAN**  
Editor

## *A Passage through India*

Last week a friend of mine was killed in a violent automobile accident. Her death and the memorial service I attended for her had a profound effect on me.

She was a friend I had not seen very often in the past few years. Our paths did not seem to cross as they once had so often with mutual Indian friends who had since moved away.

You see, this friend was from India, and from our contacts, I had learned much about her culture and beliefs.

One thing I felt about Shully (her first name) was that she was a woman ahead of the times, in India.

She wore her hair short. Not shoulder length, but cut close to the head. For an Indian woman to do that was rare from the other Indian women I knew or saw.

Another thing was that she did not wear the native sari as much as other Hindu women did when they appeared in public.

Shully also worked outside the home.

I was really impressed with her liberated attitude. And with her husband's acceptance of this progressive philosophy that she lived by.

I had several friends from India. In most of the families the wife wore her hair very long and braided. She wore the sari to functions she attended. And many of the wives avoided working outside the home.

I learned some new things about Hindu beliefs last week while preparations were being made for Shully's memorial service. These beliefs were helpful in thinking about the loss of a friend, someone in whose home I had visited, and who had been in my home.

She was intelligent and could talk on any subject. She also had a playful nature. She could be serious, but she loved to party and to laugh.

So it was difficult for me to understand why this tragedy happened, why Shully was taken away from

her husband and teenage daughter. And why it had to be such a sudden and horrifying death.

These thoughts and questions are answered in the Hindu faith in such a serene manner that they soothe the anguish and pain that comes with the loss of a loved one.

Another friend from India explained it to me last week.

"It was her destiny," she said. "God had it all planned.

"It was her time to go. She had fulfilled her life on earth."

My friend continued. "Shully never went home for lunch because she lived too far away from her job." But she was killed while on her way back to work after driving home to pick up something for a colleague.

The person who ran into her car, my other friend explained, had never been in an accident before.

So, she continued, it was God's plan. God knew her death would occur like it did at the time it did.

No one can do anything to prevent their own death that God has predetermined, according to my friend. Shully could not have done anything different to change the tragic accident. It was meant to happen.

But life on this earth is only one phase of one's experiences, the good Hindu believes. After life on this earth a person passes into another life experience.

At the memorial service for my friend we were told to visualize Shully traveling into another life experience.

Somehow, I found this visualization and this explanation of Shully's death a little comforting. It was, in a way, as if she had not really died. Instead, she exists in another phase of life, one that is just as important as this.

I am told that a Hindu accepts this destiny with serenity - and is able to cope with the sadness of their loss without becoming bitter towards others or God.



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In the early afternoon of December 30th, our Center lost one of its most valued colleagues in a tragic auto accident that stunned the whole of Pensacola. Shully Goel, a pillar of the community, leader in her profession, devoted wife, and sincere aspirant, surrendered her life at the age of 47. Hundreds paid their respects to her bereaved but brave husband, Lal Goel, who has long served as professor of Political Science at the University of West Florida. Scores of friends surrounded him with affection and solace; his daughter, Anuradha, and niece, Chitra, were pillars of support, both of them eloquent in silent heroism.

Shully was unforgettable. Her smile was like a sun rising, something beautiful and energising to behold, and when she greeted anyone it was never a social artifice or courtesy, but something substantial and genuine in herself that reached out and sounded the same chord in the other, pleasantly jarring one into a deeper reality. Meeting her was like being awakened. One always felt a little better about oneself, reassured in a way, after being with Shully. Her person tended to evoke an innate goodness in others.

The entire community marvelled at her sense of generosity, but given her nobility and unobtrusive humility, it seemed effortless and felt. Quiet, she never sought acclamation or limelight. Her very nature was compassionate, and she often saw more than she told, for she had a penetrating vision; but she preferred a kind silence to a clamorous rectitude. The result was that none could feel an enmity in her. There was something wonderful in the way she spoke, too. She would always pause before responding, as though a deep, inner reference was being made, and then her measured words would slowly stream forth. Those accustomed to ordinary speech would be surprised at their depth, touched by their sweetness. And when she sang, her voice seemed to emerge from some secret gulf, revealing the profundity of her inner being, often carrying her audience into kindred regions.

Looking into Shully's eyes was looking into something beyond Time. In those eyes was something that spoke of an eternal peace, an essential equanimity upon which all her busy and happy life was based. She accepted the challenge of the world with a broad equality; the challenge of death, too, has not been too strong for her. Hers is a true Aryan soul, one which exemplifies the good and noble, one which seeks constantly to exceed itself. She demonstrated that essential character in all the facets of her life while here, and the Mother is surely helping her to prepare for the challenge of her next soul-choice.

**THE GRIEVING.** During the first several days after the accident, I was in a sort of daze. Everything appeared hazy, without substance. Brother Krishan, his wife Santosh and their two kids flew down from Maryland to provide support and comfort. Friends and well-wishers visited the home in a stream. Some brought food and flowers; others words of comfort. I greeted each and thanked all who came without emotion, following mechanical gestures. I was in a dreamlike condition, a lost state of mind.

The weight of the immense loss hit me only after visitors were gone. Several months would pass before the reality of her permanent absence sunk into me. I was used to Shully being gone for a week or longer on office work. Only gradually did I realize that Shully was not going to return. I sobbed and shed tears. I prostrated and prayed before the Divine Mother. Life was empty and had little meaning. W. H. Auden's poem captured my soul's anguish:

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

She was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good

**Guilt.** My grief was mixed with feelings of guilt. Shully left because I did not love her enough. She left because I did not sufficiently appreciate her. If only I had loved her more and criticized her less, she would still be with me. Such were my feelings. "Guilt is perhaps the most painful companion of death."—Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

Both the grief and the feelings of guilt have abated. Yet, I still find myself, many years after the accident, shedding tears. Tears can swell up anytime, anywhere: at the beach, while driving in the countryside or while reading a text that reminds me of her. The tears I shed now are not of pain, but of sweet memory. Shully's ashes were consigned to the Gulf waters near Pensacola beach. I close my eyes and reverently bow my head in memory of her every time I visit the beach.

I recall fondly how we danced together through life's lows and highs. I feel grateful that we were together for 23 years, 1963-1986.

Fortunately, my daughter Anuradha moved back home after her graduation at Duke University in 1986. She lived with me at home and pursued the Master's degree in Finance and Accounting at UWF. Her presence at home during the next two years was a blessing. She has been my support and a shoulder to lean on. She got married in 1992. She has blessed me with three beautiful grandchildren. I am thankful.

## XV. CONCLUSION: COMING TO TERMS WITH LIFE

Shully's death propelled me to look more closely into perennial questions: Why untimely death? Why bad things happen? Why me? Why now? I read and re-read portions of the Bhagavad Gita, which gave me comfort. The soul is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. The soul does not die when the body dies.

*Ajo nityah shashvato yam purano*

*Na hanyate hanyamane sharire* (Bhagavat Gita, Ch. 2:20)

I also read selections from the Bible: Ecclesiastes, and the Gospels. Given my grieving state of mind, I liked the Book of Ecclesiastes. It speaks of the vanity of life. What does a man gain by all the toil? Is it striving after the wind?

**The book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible is a pessimistic book. Ecclesiastes questions everything. He wonders if good works matter. He wonders if it pays to be just and pious. He wonders if we are going anywhere, or whether we are going merely round and round. He questions whether or not God exists and if he exists whether he really cares. Listen to the opening lines:**

**Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.  
What does man gain by all the toil  
at which he toils under the sun?  
A generation comes, and a generation goes  
but the world remains the same forever  
The sun rises and the sun goes down  
and hastens to the place where it rises.  
The wind blows to the south,  
and goes round to the north  
round and round goes the wind.  
What has been will be again  
What has been done will be done again  
There is nothing new under the sun.**

**These are powerful lines. Ecclesiastes is either a very wise person or a very cynical one. Some attribute the book of Ecclesiastes to King Solomon when he was past his prime. The message in the book of Ecclesiastes is unmistakable. Listen to these additional memorable lines:**

**To everything there is a season  
And a time to every matter under the sun  
A time to be born and a time to die  
A time to plant and a time to reap  
A time to kill and a time to heal  
A time to laugh and a time to weep  
A time to lose and a time to keep  
A time to love and a time to hate  
A time for war and a time for peace (Eccles 3: 1-9)**

**God has made everything beautiful in its own season. A healthy, happy child is beautiful to look at; a young couple in love is beautiful to behold. These things are in their season. On the other hand, things which are out of season are pitiable. Imagine starving child who has aged before his years.**

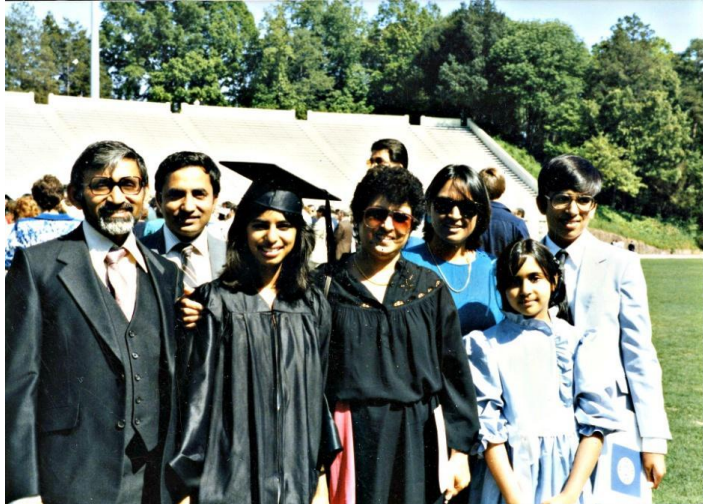
Indeed, “to everything under the sun, there is a season: a time to laugh and a time to weep; a time to loose and a time to keep.”

I made peace with myself after Shully’s untimely death, knowing life’s inevitable ups and downs. I taught at the University for another 20 plus years. And, I got remarried and settled to a happier life. It has been a great journey so far, with life’s inevitable ups and downs. Many people have helped me on the way. I am grateful.

This concludes my life story.

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**Additional pictures:**



Daughter Anuradha’s Duke graduation, 1986



Daughter Anuradha’s Master’s graduation, 1988



Our dog Jason



Me with daughter and grand kids, Longwood Gardens, PA, 2020